

THE APPEAL TO THE CHURCH.

Whenever a reform movement or organization is started or desires an impulse to make it move more rapidly, it applies to the Church. It asks from the Church not only endorsement and publicity but funds as well. It endeavors to show how clearly it is related to the Church and the Church's supreme aim. It reasons plausibly concerning the Church's duty to sustain all moral reforms and even the social and industrial movements which look to the betterment of the conditions of men, women and children. So, the Anti-Saloon League, the Child Labor Reform, the Purity League, the Sunday Rest Association, and a host of others, even down to such purely physical and semi-medical organizations as the Anti-Tuberculosis League, approach the Church and appeal to her to set apart days for considering their claims and telling their efforts, for enlisting public sympathy, and frequently for providing funds for their maintenance.

The question arises, Why this appeal to the Church? Is it made simply because here is an organized body, ready at hand, compactly organized, and the only one thus completely organized among men? Is it because these ardent reformers see in the Church a body ready to be useful in any good cause, complaisant, helpful in spirit? Or is it a direct and reasonable tribute to the power of the Church and an acknowledgment that God has set her in the world to be a bulwark for the truth, a fostering mother to everything that is pure and good and true? The latter must be the case. The appeal would hardly be so earnest, so sustained, so universal, were there not a conviction underlying it that the Church is indeed invested with influence and that she is appointed to minister to the best and noblest that is in man, that she is, as it were, God's beneficent hand stretched out to the needy as well as to the guilty.

Even if this be true, however, it does not warrant the Church in allowing herself to be drawn out of her legitimate sphere. She is a witness for the truth. She is God's agent for proclaiming the Gospel of his Son and his intermediary in bestowing peace and comfort through the Gospel. If she allows her influence to be exerted through any other channels than the preaching of Christ to the world and the setting before men of high spiritual motives and methods, she has forgotten her calling. Through Christ and faith in his name all her acts are to be performed, and when she gets away from that ground she is in danger.

The richest contribution she can make to the civic and social, to the material and esthetic, welfare of men, to culture and elevation, is through preaching Christ to men. For where he is and where he is known, there is liberty. Make an individual, or a family, or a community, or a people truly Christian and the best that is in them will come out in the life. The fundamental difference between the spiritual life which she is to proclaim and the faithful and proper efforts of men in reform movements is that the new life works from within outward, that it begins at the center and not on the circumference. It furnishes inward principles and sources of power.

In urging her members to countenance and support all wise movements for the betterment of men's condition and for the improvement of society, and to do so for

love of the Lord Jesus, is not contrary to her divine mission. So far from this, she is to help them to find the highest motive for sympathy with all such work. All this she can do without leaving the place to which God has assigned her and going as such, in her organized capacity, into fields which are not properly hers.

NOTES IN PASSING.

By "Bert."

Is God unkind to his own? I have heard some who, I have no doubt, were Christians, under stress speak as if they thought so. Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, a lame man begged for alms and they were forced to say they had neither silver nor gold. And yet these two men were the living representatives of Jehovah who is infinitely rich. Many going up at the same time had no living knowledge of God, living only for self, caring only to make a favorable impression upon men, had abundance of this world's goods. Is God capricious or unkind? Were Peter and John poor men? They had no money, that being so the world would call them poor. But does the possession of money necessarily make a man rich? I knew a man whose house caught fire, he rushed upstairs to save a trunk in which he kept his valuables. His charred remains were found beside the remains of the contents of the trunk. Was he richer or poorer for the valuables? I call no man poor who by a touch of his hand or a word can inspire hope in a soul; for a new hope is the greatest riches, and he who gives it must be rich. I call him rich to whom the sufferer goes for sympathy, to whom the despondent goes for inspiration, to whom the burdened heart instinctively goes for help. I call him miserably poor who can give only money. It was a fine thing for that lame man at the Beautiful gate that Peter and John had no money. If they had they might have given that and passed on. But not having that they gave what no money could buy. I think, maybe, that is why God keeps some of his saints poor. Having no money for the worthy causes which interest them they can only pray, but their prayers command the sympathy of God and bring larger and richer contributions than they could ever hope to give.

To put yourself in the place of another means to put him in your place.

Some can pay without praying; none can pray without paying.

To pray for others as you would for yourself means to give to others what you want for yourself.

Prayer does not get God in line with us, but us in line with God.

Nothing is invisible to the eye of faith.

He who sounds his own praise makes not music, but discord.

The sparing of the wicked is a miracle of grace no less than the conversion of the wicked.